

APPROVED MINUTES OF INFORMATION SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB

An open information session of the Board of Trustees of the Community College District of the County of Macomb was held Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., in Room 125 of the University Center, Center Campus, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township, Michigan.

1.0 [CALL TO ORDER](#)

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lorenzo at 6:02 p.m.

2.0 [ROLL CALL](#)

Present:

Katherine Lorenzo, Chairperson
Frank Cusumano, Vice Chairperson
Kristi Dean, Secretary
Roseanne DiMaria, Treasurer
Joan Flynn, Trustee
Shelley Vitale, Trustee

Absent:

Vincent Viviano, Trustee

Also present:

James Sawyer, President
Elizabeth Argiri, Executive Vice President, Business
Kevin Chandler, Vice President, College Advancement & Community Relations
Joline Davis, Vice President, Human Resources (remotely)
Tiffany Goliday, Executive Director, IDEA/Title IX
Carrie Jeffers, Vice President, Student Success
Leslie Kellogg, Provost, Vice President of Learning Unit
Sharon Kowal, Assistant to the President
William Leavens, Chief of College Police
Deb Mende, Executive Director, Office of the President
Gerri Pianko, Director of Budget and Grants
Jeffrey Steele, General Counsel, Office of General Counsel

3.0 [APPROVAL OF AGENDA](#)

MOTION by Cusumano, supported by Dean, to approve the agenda as presented.

ALL IN FAVOR:

AYES: Cusumano, Dean, DiMaria, Flynn, Vitale, Lorenzo

NAYS:

ABSENT: Viviano

MOTION CARRIED.

4.0 AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

5.0 REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS AND MATERIALS

Trustee Flynn commented that out of five purchases only one is from within Michigan and many of these are renewals. She thought we had to bid out every time. Dr. Sawyer said it depends on what the purchase is for, if it is licensing agreements, software, etc. it is not feasible with the work involved to do that, so there are renewals for systems that are dependent to run the college and teaching and learning environments. For other things we do go out periodically and get bids, it just depends on the item. We consciously try to do that to make sure we are still getting a comparable price, but it is not in our best interest as an institution to do that every time for each purchase. Trustee Flynn asked whether there is a rule requiring the college to take the lowest bidder? Dr. Sawyer said the key is we take the lowest bidder that meets the college's qualifications because sometimes we get lower bids, but they don't meet our needs. We do not have the discretion to choose a supplier because they are based in Michigan. Those are rules we are following that were established by the board some years ago. Trustee Flynn said she would have said take the lowest bid but if there is a company from Michigan they should be considered. Dr. Sawyer said he isn't going to justify why the board at that time made that decision, but it becomes challenging when there is a gray zone, sometimes multiple companies in Michigan submit bids, so then what becomes the criteria. This gives the board assurance we are getting the best value and a solid foundation to stand behind the fact that the lowest priced bidder meeting the college's specifications receives the contract.

Trustee Cusumano's questions regarding the budget were deferred until after the presentation on the budget.

Trustee Vitale shared that she feels overwhelmed with the number of expenditures and the information related to them and is distraught at just approving them so quickly every month without having the time to absorb some of these requests. Dr. Sawyer agreed there are a lot of expenditures this month, but staff are here who can explain further or address your questions.

Trustee Vitale said she is still hoping for a chart that streamlines, particularly the brick-and-mortar expenditures, maintenance and renewals. Dr. Sawyer said annual renewals tend to be software, services, etc., and we do have a sense of what the cadence is but with renovations and building expenditures we do not. EVP Argiri added that Bill Simonson, executive director of facilities, gives an annual presentation to the board on the renovation program, the projects in process and those expected in the coming year. B. Simonson presented the renovation items on this agenda in December. We try to anticipate those and prefer to have a conversation with the board in advance so you can know what to expect.

Chairperson Lorenzo asked if in addition to the *Connect* magazine are there separate brochures for the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts and the Cultural Center? Vice President of College Advancement and Community Relations Kevin Chandler replied we will do drops for the season, but not a mass mailing, because it is included in the *Connect* magazine. Chairperson Lorenzo said so we don't necessarily spend

a great deal of money on other brochures. VP Chandler said we were sending out separate brochures but have consolidated them into the *Connect* magazine at a cost savings to the college.

Trustee Vitale asked how we are addressing the changing interest rates regarding our investments? EVP Argiri replied that the investment strategy has been to hold until maturity. If we were to sell the bonds we have now at a lower interest rate the college would realize a loss. As the bonds mature, we work with Meador, our investment manager, to reinvest the funds into a higher yield. In this budget cycle, there is a little increase in the interest income. We hope over time that interest rates remain high, and our bonds are maturing at lower rates that we will continue to see that interest income increase. Trustee Vitale asked where does the interest income go? EVP Argiri said it helps support the general fund budget.

6.0 ISSUES AND UPDATES

6.1 President's Report

Closed Session – Need to hold closed session pursuant to MCL 15.268(e) to discuss collective bargaining and Trustee Cusumano requested a discussion regarding a letter from General Counsel.

Macomb Tuition Advantage Program – Dr. Sawyer said the college announced the Macomb Tuition Advantage Program on May 16. We have received very good coverage by the media. He thanked the communications department for getting the word out. We've received good feedback from some key partners and since we are between semesters there hasn't been much student feedback, but that will change and he's certain we'll hear positive things. There is a two-fold purpose to the program, one is to increase enrollment and the other is to increase completion rates. It will take some time to see the results, but that is our long-term objective. This is exciting and we will continue to update the board as the program moves along.

Enrollment Update – Spring/Summer 2023 - credit hours are down 2.8 percent compared to last year and headcount is down 2 percent.

Personnel – Dr. Sawyer is excited to recommend Aimee Adamski to the position of Registrar and Director of Enrollment Services replacing Dr. Jeffers after her promotion. A. Adamski has been with the college a long time doing a fabulous job and will be great in her new role. Also on the agenda are the annual NBU contracts. These contracts are for the staff he works most closely with and are key to the institution's success. He appreciates everything they do daily to help run the college. He can't emphasize enough how much he appreciates their support and the hard work they do on behalf of the students, the college and the community.

Property Tax Resolution – Dr. Sawyer stated the annual property tax resolution granting authority from the board to levy tax on Macomb County properties at a rate of 1.4077 mills is on the agenda. With inflation being high, the millage rate was not subject to a Headlee rollback this year. Property taxes will generate \$48 million in revenue for the college.

Administrative – Action Items – **Item 11.4** Approval of Grant Submission to the Michigan Arts and Culture Council required for funding. Request is \$30,000. **Item 11.5** Replacement of UC1 cooling tower and PDC

rooftop units which are 32 and 25 years old respectively. They are well beyond their life expectancy. Due to anticipated long lead times we are asking the board to approve the budget at this time. The bids will be presented as an information item later this year.

Purchases – **11.3A** – *Connect Magazine*, Dr. Sawyer continues to receive positive feedback from the community about it. **11.3B** – Renewal of registration system for workforce and continuing education. **11.3C** – Extension of critical supplemental programming resources. **11.3D** – Maintenance agreement for imaging software. **11.3E** – Renewal of data backup system. **11.3F** – Risk Management annual contribution, which represents a 10 percent increase based on claims, increased insured property values, cost of cyber coverage, police professional rates, inflation and a general hardening of the insurance market overall. Over the past 11 years the average increase is 2.26 percent. The Risk Management Authority has been very beneficial to the college, and we look forward to continuing that relationship.

IDEA Update – Dr. Sawyer said the objective leads for Strategy 6 continue to work on training and professional learning for students and employees. They are working on the creation of a website link for the Macomb community and a presence on the portal for students and employees to access IDEA-related information. The IDEA council is working on designing an IDEA Plan to serve as a tool and document outlining IDEA components of the strategic plan and other IDEA initiatives. Prior to the IDEA council there were multiple initiatives related to diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the college and this is an attempt to create a repository to house that information and in a place employees can readily access and be familiar with.

D3C3 Grant – Dr. Sawyer shared that progress continues to be made on the D3C3 grant.

- Our Success Coaches had over 3,800 contacts at the end of last term with the majority made through email, but texts and phone calls are included as well.
- K12 Relations outreach is going well. We continue to make visits to high schools and present different options, including the Macomb Tuition Advantage and the Michigan Achievement Scholarship.
- The ISD is holding a first-time event tomorrow, and the college is participating as a partner/sponsor. This event is targeted to high school graduates who don't know what they want to do now that they have graduated. A variety of organizations will be there, hiring organizations, training companies and educational providers. We are there to promote the programs we offer and to assist people in completing the FAFSA. This is an exciting event, and registration as of Friday was between 600 and 800 students. Hats off to the ISD for pulling this together. We anticipate this will be a good community event and hope many of these students will find Macomb to be the right solution for them.
- The college will be holding career academies this summer – culinary, architecture/construction, public service/dental and Camp Scrubs which highlights our healthcare programs.
- Our student mental health manager continues to manage 19 active cases but expects to close most of them out as we move into the summer semester.

Donation in Memory of Former Trustee Sadie Bialock – Dr. Sawyer said that former trustee Sadie Bialock recently passed away. S. Bialock was a trustee from 1973 to 1984. Last month when recognizing the passing of former trustee J. Kelly and the subsequent donation, Trustee Cusumano had concerns about it

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and asked General Council Steele for an opinion. General Council Steele offered that opinion and sought an outside opinion too. We will discuss this further in closed session.

Envisioning Discussion – Dr. Sawyer said the Envisioning Discussion is an idea Chairperson Lorenzo shared as an opportunity for the trustees and president to get together and chat about the college, share ideas and thoughts and help provide direction for the future. We are looking at meeting on Tuesday, August 29, in the evening, in UC room 125. This meeting is intended to be casual and a conversation.

Institutional Development Day – Dr. Sawyer said IDD was held May 9. This is the one time of the year the entire college comes together. He thanked Trustee Vitale for attending and participating in the whole day. This year is the first time since the pandemic we decided to hold IDD as in-person only, no virtual option. The turnout by staff was very nice to see.

Henry Ford Hospital Macomb – Dr. Sawyer said on the same day as IDD, HFHM held their ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of their new tower. He thanked Chairperson Lorenzo for attending and representing the college at the ceremony. HFHM is a key partner, and he appreciates her being there on behalf of the college.

College Academic Boost and Learning Experiences (ABLE) – Dr. Sawyer stated a new program will be starting this summer. It originates from an outpouring of legislation recently passed by the legislature who decided something needed to be done to address the learning loss due to the pandemic. A rather large sum of money was allocated to the institutions and all the community colleges are participating in the program. The State titled it Academic Catchup, but at Macomb we have labeled it - College Academic Boost and Learning Experiences (ABLE). Many people worked hard to pull this together, but there are two he wants to recognize, Daniel Brengel and Aimee Adamski. They did the heavy lift and pulled this together in a short amount of time and we appreciate their accomplishment. ABLE focuses on helping students who are intending to attend college develop math and English skills. Per the legislation, the program is open to any student, they don't have to attend Macomb. We are going to weave in additional exposure to the college, such as our robust Student Success seminars. We think it will be a good program. We are offering an incentive for completers of \$550 that can be used toward Macomb tuition, the purchase of a laptop or a stipend for needs to support their college success. There are 16 students currently enrolled. We are offering three four-week sessions at both campuses with morning and evening timeframes. It is a robust portfolio. If this is successful and helps students, we may want to continue the program and help students be successful in their first year of college. We couldn't offer the \$550 incentive because that came from the legislated funding.

Capital Outlay Committee, Lansing – On May 3, Dr. Sawyer and Dean Don Hutchison testified before the Joint Capital Outlay Committee about the college's next capital outlay project the Mobility and Sustainability Education Center. It is a \$59 million project at south campus and is the last major renovation we are going to have in the near future. It will be a renovation, partial demolition, and expansion of M building at south campus. Currently M building houses automotive, some skilled trades programs, climate control, and architecture. The facility is outdated, built in the 1980's and has all kinds of problems including flooding when it rains hard. The T building project, which is a capital outlay project, is just

wrapping up and will open this fall, so we didn't anticipate having another capital outlay project come up this quickly. He just learned a couple of hours ago that the project didn't make the bill. We are still investigating why, but he is not too upset because this tends to be cyclical and there's no reason to panic. He is worried about the \$11 million we are asking for to renovate the Public Service Institute. He hasn't seen that project anywhere and he's working with Nicole McKee to get it in somewhere.

Commencements, May 5, 2023 – Dr. Sawyer said the Commencements ceremony on May 5th was exceptional. There were 480 students who walked, that is more participants than we've had in the recent past. He thanked Trustee Flynn for attending and shaking every graduate's hand. Typically, winter commencements are held in the MCPA but as the number of graduates participating has grown, we have encountered a situation of having to limit the number of tickets each graduate receives. This is a celebration for our graduating students, and we want to be able to provide them with more tickets. The executive leadership team has decided to change the process and host our winter commencements at the Sports & Expo Center.

Student Program Celebrations – Dr. Sawyer said in addition to commencements we have several program celebrations too. These are opportunities for students in specific programs to celebrate with those they attended classes with much more closely. There were celebrations/pinning ceremonies in Surgical Technology, Nursing, Culinary, Respiratory Therapy, Police Academy and Fire Academy. He thanked Trustee Flynn for attending the ceremonies for Culinary and Fire Academy, Trustee Cusumano for attending the Police Academy and Trustee DiMaria for attending the Police and Fire Academies. We appreciate when trustees attend ceremonies, the symbolism of your presence is noteworthy.

Early College of Macomb Graduation – Dr. Sawyer said the Early College graduation was held last week. There were 192 Early College Graduates. He thanked Trustee Dean for attending. This is always a nice event at Jimmy's Johns Field, but this may have been the last one because we are working with the ISD to hopefully hold it on campus next spring.

Provost Kellogg introduced Jon (JT) Neuffer, recently hired executive director in the Learning Unit.

6.2 [2023-2024 Initial General Fund Budget](#)

Gerri Pianko, director of budget and grants presented a balanced budget to the board of trustees.

Questions:

Trustee Cusumano asked what is the methodology whereby this projection is calculated for the 2023-2024 enrollment figures? EVP Argiri said the methodology is based on what we think the enrollment projection will be for the coming semester. We estimate if we expect a decline or an increase and based on that percentage, use it to calculate the anticipated FYES, credit hours, billable contact hours for the coming year. Trustee Cusumano said the enrollment trend has been down, so other than optimistic lollipopland, how do you anticipate and calculate into the budget a 2.38 percent increase in enrollment? EVP Argiri said the financial calculation is one percent in billable contact hours when you look at the financial impact to the budget versus credit hours, we

made that conversion a few years ago. We are optimistic and feel that with the addition of the Michigan Achievement Scholarship may encourage more students to seek higher education in the coming academic year. Dr. Sawyer added that we saw a significant drop of high school graduates going directly to higher ed and that was tied to the pandemic, but we think it will bounce back somewhat. There was a long-term history running at 65 percent and then it dropped to 55 percent in a matter of two years. We anticipate that is going to return to the long-term norm as normalcy enters the high school process again and becomes conditional without all the disruptions caused by the pandemic. We aren't looking for a huge turnaround but are optimistic with one percent which was the amount determined prior to the Macomb Tuition Advantage announcement. We hope the MTA will not only increase enrollment but also incentivize students to take additional credits.

Trustee Vitale asked what segment of the net decrease of seven full-time positions from the budget is due to retirements? Director Pianko said there are two administrators retiring between now and the end of the fiscal year and rather than filling those positions we allocated existing resources to cover those duties and eliminated those positions from the budget. Trustee Vitale said with the seven positions and the 50 percent of the vacant full-time positions there isn't an itemization of what has been eliminated, so she is wondering without that listing what is the meaningfulness of those vacancies? What are they attributed to? What brought them on? How does it affect us? Is this something that happens regularly or just something that is happening now? Dr. Sawyer said it is happening now. It is a routine process for us to look at staffing and reallocate positions regularly. We found ourselves in a situation where we needed to make cuts in staffing to get a balanced budget. We had to look at where we could make those reductions, reallocate resources and continue to do what we still need to do. We have plans on how to cover the work of these two eliminated positions with existing staff. EVP Argiri stated we shared with the board during our initial discussion in January what we thought the 23/24 budget would look like and set a target budget cut of \$750,000 and these positions are how we achieved that cut.

Trustee Vitale stated she realizes we are in a transition period, but it is important for the board, in the larger scheme of things, to know what positions were eliminated. Dr. Sawyer said one was in Institutional Research and the other in the Center for Teaching and Learning, Academic Development specifically. As for the five faculty positions, when a faculty member retires, we assess if we need to fill that position, if we do, it is posted. If we aren't sure and enrollment is down, we don't post. They become general faculty positions with no specific discipline assigned and we will reallocate them where needed.

Trustee Flynn said she can't understand how it says in the budget that they are laid off and then somebody is hired. How can you acclaim for them? Dr. Sawyer said it is typically because people retire all the time and we pay attention to the total number of employees and don't exceed that. We do replace people and most often the new hires you are approving is a replacement. We tell you when there is a new position and lately the new positions are reallocations of other positions. Trustee Flynn said it looks like you are hiring a new person. Dr. Sawyer said we have eliminated

a position somewhere else, most often, not always, but most often through attrition and retirements.

Trustee Cusumano said he will be making a motion at the meeting to amend the budget of \$43,496 for the board of trustees to reflect the actual expenditures which he believes should be zero. If we meet 12 times per year, are we paying \$40,000 for the food service at this meeting, is that what that is for? EVP Argiri said part of it is for the Association for Community College Trustees (ACCT) dues of about \$8,000. The other part of that budget is for professional development/conference travel, trips for ACCT and MCCA, as well as the board meetings. Trustee Cusumano said in the spirit of austerity and as someone who views this budget being an uncompensated trustee, he would like it to reflect the \$8,000 and asked if there were actual expenditures over the course of the last fiscal year for attendance to conferences and if there is an actual number? EVP Argiri said she did a quick analysis of the board's budget and the professional development/conference piece ranges per year and was impacted by the pandemic. But going back five years, in the high year there was about \$19,000 charged to the professional development/conference account and the low year, during the pandemic, was \$299. For the dues/memberships account, about \$8,000 was charged for the annual ACCT membership dues. The activities account is where catering for the board meetings is charged, advertisements in the Macomb Daily to advertise the dates/times of the board meetings and other things that support the board of trustees. In the high year, expenses totaled about \$30,000 and last year about \$13,000.

Trustee Cusumano said he would make a motion at the general meeting to amend that budgeted amount down to the high-end year with actual expenses of \$30,000. EVP Argiri said in the resolution the board adopts in Item 7.3C Initial 2023-2024 General Fund Budget it includes language that the board approves total revenue amount and total expenditure amount for the budget. If we revise it to a different number, all the numbers will need to be adjusted throughout the resolution. EVP Argiri suggested that in September or October with the feedback you have given we can provide the board with your actual expenditures from fiscal year 2023 and you can add that information to your decision and collectively decide the total amount of your budget going forward. The revisions will be made at budget revision time which is adopted in December. Trustee Cusumano said that is acceptable but in the future, he thinks the board should be able to participate in the establishment of that number rather than having it take it or leave it and handed to us in the budget. On that particular item we are sophisticated enough to be able to determine our own budget without having to be an educational professional.

EVP Argiri asked that President Sawyer and Chairperson Lorenzo discuss with her the process in which the board can participate in the conversation to determine an appropriate budget for the board of trustees for each budget cycle (twice per year). Dr Sawyer said we could make a recommendation when we present the budget in January, giving the board some time to decide whether to support that recommendation. Trustee Vitale said she agrees with Trustee Cusumano

that we need a little more wiggle room to make decisions without looking like we are holding up business.

7.0 CLOSED SESSION

MOTION by Cusumano, supported by Flynn to go into closed session.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Cusumano, supported by DiMaria, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF MACOMB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Acting Secretary